

■ Link between heart drugs and suicide

The March 7, 1998 issue of the *British Medical Journal* finds a significant correlation between suicide and the use of calcium channel blockers used to treat high blood pressure.

The study found that patients using calcium channel blockers were five times more likely to commit suicide than those not taking the drug. ▲

■ FDA: Popular heartburn drug causes heart problems

On January 24, 2000, the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued a warning that the popular heartburn drug Propulsid should only be used as a last resort—and then only after the patient has had an EKG to rule out heart problems.

The warning comes after 70 deaths and 200 reports of irregular heartbeat and other heart disturbances since Propulsid was introduced in 1993.

The FDA warning says that patients should not be given Propulsid if they have: heart disease, valve disease, any history of an irregular heartbeat, abnormal EKG, kidney disease, lung disease, low blood levels of potassium, calcium or magnesium, eating disorders, dehydration or prolonged vomiting.

Propulsid should not be taken with antibiotics, antifungals, drugs for irregular heartbeat, protease inhibitors (taken for AIDS), antidepressants, antipsychotics or grapefruit juice.

Common drug ingredient could cause strokes

Reuters health reports the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has recommended that a common ingredient in many over the counter drugs be reclassified as unsafe because it may cause hemorrhagic strokes (bleeding in the brain).

The drug, phenylpropanolamine or PPA, is found in many common non-prescription cold and cough medications and appetite suppressants including Accutrim, Alka-Seltzer, BC Cold Powders, Comtrex, Contac, Dexetrim, Dimetapp, Naldecon DX, Permathene, Robitussin, Tavist-D and Triaminic.

The five-year study found that stroke patients were 50% more likely to have been exposed to PPA within a three day period prior to having their stroke.

Patients who used cough and cold remedies containing PPA were 23% more likely to have a stroke and those using appetite suppressants containing PPA were sixteen times more likely to have a stroke. The FDA estimates that PPA may be responsible for 200-500 strokes every year in people under 50 years of age.

Predictably, the manufacturers of products using PPA felt that the study did not establish a clear cut relationship between PPA and strokes. However, according to lead researcher Dr. Ralph Horwitz of the Yale University School of Medicine, statistically, these figures "could not have been expected by chance."

By way of commentary, all drugs pose a risk. What's the next symptom-masking drug that research will discover is dangerous? Your body has a natural tendency to maintain its own health provided nothing interferes with how it functions. Chiropractic care helps ensure proper function by making sure the master control system, the nervous system, is free of interference.

■ Aspirin a day dangerous

The November 11, 2000 issue of the *British Medical Journal* finds that even small doses of aspirin every day can cause such serious damage to the body that patients need to reconsider very closely the trade-off between the possible benefits and the likely damage.

According to the study, in which doctors reviewed 24 different studies involving almost 66,000 patients, people over 50 who take the drug daily almost double their chances of developing ulcers and internal bleeding which can lead to death.

The researchers found that "no evidence exists that reducing the dose or using modified release formulations would reduce the incidence of gastrointestinal haemorrhage."

■ Natural Estrogen Better For Heart Protection Than Synthetic Hormone

The February 15, 2002 issue of the *American Journal of Epidemiology* reports that a woman's natural supply of estrogen provides more protection from heart disease than Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) using synthetic estrogen.

Researchers at the University Medical Center, Utrecht, the Netherlands, found that women who begin menopause later in life stand less chance of dying from heart disease. They theorize that it's because she is exposed to her own natural estrogen for a longer period of time.

Last July, the American Heart Association issued an advisory saying that there wasn't enough evidence to warrant the use of HRT for the prevention of heart disease.

Commentary: It's possible that medicine is looking in the wrong direction in the first place. First off, early menopause may be normal for that particular woman experiencing it. Secondly, if early-menopausal women are more likely to develop heart disease, it may be from other factors besides reduced estrogen.

Interference in the form of vertebral subluxation, dietary deficiencies, or environmental, chemical or emotional stresses could be causing the body to prematurely shut down estrogen production. Removing these different types of interference makes much more sense to us. Simply replacing natural estrogen with synthetic estrogen does not address the underlying cause of why production is decreasing and certainly doesn't even approach the question of whether or not it's even necessary. When working without interference, our bodies know what they need to do and when to do it.

■ Vioxx linked to blood clots, heart attacks and strokes

Reuters news service reported on April 19, 2002 that sales of the arthritis drug Vioxx are down because the drug has been linked to blood clots that can cause heart attacks and stroke. Vioxx is produced by the drug manufacturer Merck & Co.

Last year, Vioxx revenue fell nearly \$1 billion short of initial projections because of concerns that patients taking the drug develop blood clots that can cause heart attacks and stroke. An August, 2001 study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* found that the class of drugs known as COX-2 inhibitor drugs, which includes Vioxx, Celebrex and Bextra, increased the risk of heart attack, stroke and other cardiovascular problems.

Commentary: Over and over again we hear of new “miracle” drugs that end up causing more problems that are more dangerous than the disease they are supposed to treat. Taking drugs does nothing to allow the highest expression of health. Making sure your body is functioning at its highest potential possible with Chiropractic wellness care is the best way to get and stay healthy.

■ Viagra Linked To Blood Clotting, Heart Attacks

The January 10, 2002 issue of Cell reports that research at the University of Illinois at Chicago College of Medicine has found Viagra may be the cause of heart attack and strokes in men who take the impotence drug.

This study surprised the researchers because for the past 20 years, it has been thought that a compound in cells called cGMP prevented heart attacks and stroke by keeping blood platelets from clumping together or clotting. This study found that not only does cGMP cause platelet clumping that can lead to heart attacks and strokes, but also that Viagra actually increases levels of cGMP in the body.

Viagra was originally developed to prevent heart attacks and strokes by stopping platelets from clumping together. As of July 1999, 564 deaths of men taking Viagra have been reported.